

THE NEW PHASE OF NAPOLEONIC HISTORY.

ABOUT thirteen years ago, an historical work was published in France that almost at once attracted general attention, as well by its isolated position as by the audacity and ability with which it sustained it. For years there had scarcely been a dissenting voice raised in France, of all countries, about Napoleon, and even everywhere else history had been overawed and blinded by his genius. Suddenly the work of Pierre Lanfrey made its appearance, bringing dismay to the camp of servile critics and politicians who surrounded the throne of the third Napoleon, and who realized only too well how injurious must be the effect upon the nephew of so ruthless an exposure of the uncle. It was in vain for them to sneer at it or to pass it over in silence. The name of Lanfrey was too well known and too highly esteemed to admit of such a thing, while a single glance at the book itself was sufficient to convince even the most unwilling reader that it was not written for eccentricity's sake, but had a basis of profound study. The issues were squarely stated, and had to be squarely met. The brilliant rhetoric and bitter partisanship of Michelet could be opposed by rhetoric almost as brilliant, and by partisanship even more bitter; but against the

armor of fact and of logic in which Lanfrey had incased himself, such light weapons shivered and broke, like rapiers against a coat of mail. The battle was an unequal one from the first. One after another his adversaries retired, defeated and discomfited, leaving it to time and to the specious charge of exaggeration to find some loophole through which their steels could enter. But in this hope they were disappointed. Time, instead of weakening the judgment pronounced by Lanfrey, has only confirmed it, and his countrymen, instead of forgetting his work, persist in reading it more and more. To the outer world, however, the personality of this good patriot and great writer is still too little known.

Pierre Lanfrey was born in Chambéry, in Savoy, in 1828.* His father was a retired captain who had served under Napoleon, and who retained for his old commander the most unbounded admiration and affection. He died when his son was but six years old, leaving his widow in very straitened financial circumstances. Madame Lanfrey, though illiterate and of humble origin, appears to have been a woman of

* "Revue des Deux Mondes" for September, October, and November, 1880.

very superior mind, and her devotion to her only child, and his love and admiration for her, are wonderfully touching. Partly from motives of economy, and partly from religious conviction, she sent her son to the Chambéry college of Jesuits to be educated. He had not been there many years, however, before he had trouble with his superiors. Having surreptitiously obtained and read a book reflecting on the Jesuits, he refused to deny the fact when informed against by one of his comrades, and was sent home to his mother in disgrace. He was dispatched to another ecclesiastical college, at St. Jean-de-Maurienne. The time that he spent there was probably the most unpleasant period of his life. Thoughtful and grave beyond his years, he was already in rebellion against the dogmas and the intellectual tyranny of the church. His mind craved a more liberal supply of intellectual food than the college could or would supply. At last he obtained his mother's consent to his going to Paris to study. To enable him to do so, she was obliged to make the greatest sacrifices. Though he felt this keenly, and tried, by every means in his power, to express his gratitude and devotion, he never, for one moment, repented of the step he had taken. With a patience that was almost incredible in one of his years, and with an energy that bordered on ferocity, he carried out the course of study which he confidently believed would eventually enable him to produce a work both "solid and durable." His faith in his literary genius never deserted him. During all the long years of privation and hope deferred through which he had to pass, he never expressed a doubt of the final result. At last his time came. In 1857 appeared his work on "The Church and the Philosophers of the Eighteenth Century." It was greeted with admiration by the most noted literary men of the day, and Lanfrey's fame as a writer and a thinker was established. This work was followed in the next year by an essay on the French Revolution, which added greatly to his reputation, but which gave much dissatisfaction both to republicans and royalists, because he criticised the acts of both with the same impartial candor and severity. It placed him at once in a position of political isolation—a position which his independence of thought and unerring sense of justice compelled him ever after to occupy. The "Lettres d'Everard," a brilliant philippic against the vices and weaknesses of the men and the society of

the day, gave him an even wider celebrity than his two previous works, while, at the same time, it increased the alarm with which he was regarded by the extremists of every political and social school.

About this time the "Revue Nationale" was founded, with the intention of making it the organ of the moderate Republicans. Lanfrey was selected by its editors to write the "Chronique de la Quinzaine," a commentary upon the chief political and literary events of the fortnight. The position proved to be very distasteful to him. An ardent Republican, a cordial despiser of the Napoleonic *régime*, he writhed under the strict censorship imposed by a government he believed to be a usurpation. On the other hand, his independence often brought him into conflict with his co-editors, and, after some years, he abandoned the office and devoted himself almost exclusively to the completion of his great work, the history of Napoleon, of which the two first volumes appeared in 1867, and the third and fourth in 1868-70. While engaged in this work, however, he did not lose his interest in political affairs. His letters written at this period—1867-70—are filled with gloomy forebodings and singularly accurate prophesies of the catastrophe that was about to come. He recognizes the prodigious power of Bismarck, expresses the deepest abhorrence for the Mexican expedition of Napoleon, and is overflowing with enthusiasm for the unity of Italy. No one in France deplored the declaration of war against Prussia more earnestly than he. "One cannot bring oneself," he writes, "to wish for the defeat of one's country, and yet one hesitates to hope for victory, for, at home, victory would only bring an aggravation of despotism, and, abroad, conquests impossible to preserve, and the germs of a hundred wars to come." He was in the *Corps Législatif* when M. Schneider announced the Government's decision, and one can imagine his feelings when he heard the president, with unconscious plagiarism, quote word for word a sentence from one of his last volumes: "The author of a war is not he who declares it, but he who has made it necessary." As if to add to the irony of this incident, Napoleon III. soon afterward repeated the phrase officially, attributing it to Montesquieu. Yet in her hour of trial his country found him at the post of danger. In spite of his delicate health, he enlisted in the Mobs of Savoy, and served with them till the close of the war. His active inter-

in politics, however, did not flag. He protested with vehemence, through the press and in public, against the dictatorship of Gambetta, whom he declared to be a usurper, and an incapable one at that, and demanded a general election, in order that the country might be represented by a government that was at least lawful. These attacks attracted such general attention that Gambetta, who recognized his ability and magnanimously overlooked his accusations against himself, offered him the prefecture du Nord. This position he sternly refused to accept, declaring that he would take no office but an elective one until a government had been established by the consent of the whole people. The followers of Gambetta were less generous than their leader. They overwhelmed him with savage epithets; he was "a supporter of the Bonapartists, a clerical—he was sold to the Orleanists, to the Prussians." At the elections for the *Assemblée Constituante*, held at his native place, Chambéry, in the early part of 1871, they united with the clericals, who shrank from voting for the author of "The Church and the Philosophers of the Eighteenth Century," and defeated his candidacy. Lanfrey was greatly chagrined at this defeat, but he was recompensed in part by being chosen, at the same elections, a deputy from the electoral district of the Bouche du Rhone—a district in which he had never set foot, and where he had not a single personal friend. In his address of thanks, he says: "If I rightly interpret your thoughts, you have chosen in me the persistent enemy of all sorts of despotism—the man who has never wished to separate the cause of democracy from that of liberty." His earnest support of the policy of M. Thiers, whom, as historian, he had once so bitterly criticised, soon led to his appointment as ambassador to Switzerland. He fulfilled the duties of this delicate position with such dignity and tact that, upon the resignation of Thiers in 1873, the Federal Council unanimously requested of the new government that he should be retained in his place. The Duc de Broglie gladly consented, but Lanfrey would only agree to stay upon condition that his resignation should be at once accepted if, in his judgment, the new government did not conform to the wishes of the more moderate wing of the Republican party. This event soon happened. The vote in the Assembly concerning the prorogation of the powers of MacMahon decided him. His resignation was accepted, and he returned to Ver-

sailles to take his seat once more as a simple deputy. He now had leisure to take up the history of Napoleon again. The fifth volume appeared in 1875, and was received with enthusiasm by political friends and foes. Gambetta, meeting him at the depot at Versailles, rushed up, shook him by the hand, and warmly congratulated him.

The last political act of Lanfrey was the composition of an election address stating the views of the Left Center, the parliamentary group with which he was then acting in unison. This address, dignified in tone, clear, filled with words of wisdom and moderation, well deserved to be his crowning effort. "You have but one way to preserve the republic," he writes, "and that is to show yourselves worthy of it. Turn from those seekers after popularity who overwhelm you with promises they will never be able to keep, and with an adulation that is injurious by its very excess. If you would know who deceive you, observe who flatter you. Give your votes neither to those suspicious agitators who foment social animosity because they live by it, nor to those incorrigible sectaries who only advocate clemency in order to reestablish crime." Not long after the publication of this address, Lanfrey was elected by the Assembly a senator for life, "without," as he truly says, "having raised a finger to obtain the position."

But he was not to enjoy the honor long. A sickness that he had contracted during a trip to Italy, in the fall of 1876, broke out once more. It was greatly augmented by his anxiety in regard to public affairs, of which at this time he took the gloomiest view. Discouraged and broken down, he retired to the house of a friend, near Billière, to pass in peace the few weeks of life that were left to him. His last hours were soothed by the tenderest care, and by the many messages of respect and affection that were sent to him by political friends and foes. Far from his native place, in the little cemetery of Billière, lies the body of Pierre Lanfrey, of whom the Duc d'Audiffret Pasquier, speaking in the name of the French Senate, truly said: "All parties respected him and all his colleagues loved him, because but one sentiment dictated his writings and dominated his political career: love of his country and of her liberties."

Regarded merely as an historian, Lanfrey deserves the greatest possible admiration. His work shows that he possessed in a rare degree all those numerous qualities demanded from

a man who undertakes to give us a true and clear account of a particularly confused and exciting period in the life of a great nation. The patience with which he has collected his material is scarcely less wonderful than the judgment and skill he displays in threshing out this vast mass, and separating the wheat from the chaff. As for the language in which he embodies his results, it is almost above praise. In clearness, vigor, and beauty it rivals that of Macaulay; in a certain unconscious brilliancy—which, if we are to believe M. Taine, no Saxon writer ever entirely possesses—it even surpasses that of the great English master. Lanfrey collects his facts like a German, judges them like an Englishman, and presents them like a Frenchman. In other words, he brings to his work three great qualities, the possession of any two of which would be sufficient to place him in the first rank of historians.

But it is not merely as an historian that we are to consider him. He is, in every sense of the word, a reformer—the apostle among his own countrymen of a new school of historical ethics. It is not that he takes a new view of Napoleon's character, but that he applies to his actions a code of morals which other French historians have refused to acknowledge when writing of the man. It has been the constant habit of Napoleon's biographers to regard him from a strictly national stand-point. Criticism upon his conduct was never ventured on unless it could be applied to some flagrant violation on his part of the rights of the French people. That other people also had rights which Napoleon should have respected was a fact ignored. No matter how unjust, tyrannical, and brutal his attacks were upon the rest of the world, they were considered perfectly correct so long as they redounded to the "glory" of France. Lanfrey has completely emancipated himself from such narrow views. He criticises Napoleon's foreign policy even more severely than he does his domestic, does not scruple to denounce the injustice of his wars because they were fought by Frenchmen, and fails to find consolation in the fact that the oppressor of France was, in a still greater degree, the oppressor of almost all Europe. He manfully refuses to bow down before and worship that seductive but evil goddess, "Glory," who has heretofore found her chief priests among French historians, and to whom so many millions of precious lives have been fanatically sacrificed.

Napoleon was generally regarded in France as "glory" personified, and the consequence is, most Frenchmen that have written about him have done so kneeling. They have not written biographies, but eulogies. Lanfrey, on the other hand, goes calmly up to the "joss" and examines him with the eyes of a critic, not those of a devotee; tells us of what material he is made, pries into his interior mechanism, applies tests to the gilding, to see whether it is real or sham; in short, gives us the figure as it really is, looked at rationally through the medium of common sense, and not through those thick clouds of incense, in the shape of sophistry, with which his predecessors have religiously surrounded their idol before they dared to look upon his face.

And what are his conclusions? They may be summed up in a few words. Intellectually, he believes Napoleon to have been an extraordinarily great commander, a poor statesman, a worse diplomatist, a striking, but bizarre, speaker, and no legislator at all. Morally, he believes him to have been an exquisite combination of Satan and Mephistopheles; and we do not see how any one who carefully reads his work can fail to come to a similar conclusion.

The political crimes of Napoleon are confessedly so colossal that heretofore mankind has been loath to believe that they were committed in the sole interest of their author, and has ingeniously attempted to make "circumstances"—that much-abused word—responsible for them.

Lanfrey's hard-headed logic, however, effectually disposes of all these charitable theories. He proves by relentless facts that the history of France under Napoleon is nothing more or less than a record of the development of one man's selfish ambition. As for Napoleon's personal crimes, if, under these circumstances, it is admissible to make the distinction, they fully entitle him to take high rank among the Borgias and other monsters of history. It is hardly doing justice to his evil nature to say that he was an assassin, a robber, an apostate, a forger, a hypocrite, a rascal, and a liar—and such a liar! These are not mere epithets, but words which express proven facts.

It is really no exaggeration to assert that he was absolutely without moral sense. Carlyle tells a story of a German emperor who, when corrected for a mistake he made in Latin, replied: "I am king of the Romans, and above grammar." Napo-

leop's arrogance was infinitely greater. He thought himself above morality, and really seems to have believed that he had a perfect right to commit any crime, political or personal, that would advance his interests by an iota; and, in truth, he did commit so many that it is almost impossible to keep track of them.

How widely Lanfrey's explanations of the nature and causes of Napoleon's progress differ from those generally entertained, will be seen at almost every page.

In the first place, for instance, he dissipates the nimbus that has heretofore enveloped Napoleon's sudden rise from obscurity to military prominence. He shows us that there was, after all, nothing so very preternatural about it. At the time of his first coming on the scene of action, the chances were never greater for men who had, like himself, received a complete military education. There was a dearth of properly trained officers. Most of the graduates of the military establishments were enemies, from the first, of the popular cause, and were to be found fighting in the ranks of the emigrants. Those who had originally sided with the revolution had been, almost to a man, killed or proscribed. The demand for efficient officers was, therefore, so very much greater than the supply that it would have been a great matter of surprise had Napoleon not risen with unusual rapidity, even had he been possessed of no more than ordinary talents.

A very characteristic passage is that in which he discusses the brutal massacre of twenty-five hundred Turkish soldiers, at Jaffa, during the invasion of Syria. The circumstances of this cold-blooded execution are too well known to need more than a brief comment.

In his advance into Syria, Napoleon, after capturing the towns El Arish and Gaza, stormed Jaffa. The French troops, exasperated at the unexpectedly obstinate resistance they encountered, inflicted a most bloody punishment upon the people and the garrison. After the massacre had been checked, by the efforts of a few French officers, twenty-five hundred soldiers of the garrison still remained alive, as prisoners. These Napoleon ordered to be put to the sword. The original copy of the order for this execution, in which he instructs the executioners to take care that not one of the wretches should escape, still exists. Other historians have labored, with more ingenuity than humanity, to cover up the enormity of this crime by asserting that Napoleon had

not food enough for their support, and that he had, moreover, a technical right to do what he did, because the prisoners were found to be men whom he had already captured at El Arish and released on parole. Lanfrey disposes of the first excuse by quoting from Bonaparte's own report of the affair to the Directory, in which he says: "At Jaffa we took more than four hundred thousand (400,000) rations of biscuits and two hundred thousand (200,000) hundred-weight of rice." The other excuse is shown to be even more unworthy. By the application of the simplest arithmetic, he overturns all the finely spun arguments of the apologists. Let us give his own words:

"We found at El Arish," he [Napoleon] wrote to the Directory, "five hundred Albanians, five hundred Mogrebins, and two hundred Anatolians. The Mogrebins have entered our service. I have made them an auxiliary corps." Supposing that all the Albanians and all the Anatolians had fled to Jaffa, which is not admissible, and which it was impossible to verify, that would have made only seven hundred men, dispersed among a garrison of four thousand, the half of which had been already massacred. But, admitting the truth of all the conditions of this hypothesis, the number of El Arish soldiers among the prisoners of Jaffa could not have been more than two or three hundred men. * * * The pretended identity of the prisoners of Jaffa with those of El Arish is one of the numerous fables invented by Bonaparte at Saint Helena to influence the judgment of history. There is not a trace of this assertion in the numberless letters and pieces of various kinds in which Bonaparte gives an account of the event; there is not a word of it in the narrative of Miot, the historiographer of the Egyptian expedition. It is evident that if these prisoners had formed part of the garrison of El Arish, the general would have taken advantage of such a pretext to lighten the odious effect of his order. In writing to the Directory, he merely said, 'I have treated with severity the garrison, who allowed themselves to be taken with arms in their hands.' This was the single crime which, according to his construction of the 'rules of war,' authorized the dreadful massacre." *

This is only one of the innumerable instances where Lanfrey positively annihilates the specious sophisms that grave and respected historians have successfully attempted to palm upon the world as truth.

His review of Napoleon in the character of statesman and diplomatist is marked by the same sound sense and absence of hero-worship that distinguish his remarks on the moral character of the man. He shows, most conclusively, we think, that Napoleon's civil abilities were of no high order. His military talents and resources were so colossal that he had but to threaten

* History of Napoleon I. By Pierre Lanfrey. Macmillan & Co. London and New York.

and he gained his point, no matter how ridiculous that point might be. In considering Napoleon, it is amazing to find how often people fall into the error of estimating the profundity and grandeur of his conceptions by the great effects their execution had upon the world. The decree of Berlin, for instance, was anything but a great conception, yet it directly brought about some of the greatest movements in history.

Looking at the matter from an unprejudiced point of view, we really cannot understand why Napoleon should be called a great diplomatist any more than we can see why a robber, who holds a pistol to your head and demands your money or your life, should be called a persuasive man, because you give him what he asks for. There is scarcely an instance where this "great diplomatist" brought a diplomatic negotiation to a successful close without the employment of threats or force. To put it paradoxically, he won his peaceful victories at the point of his sword. Nor will his most important political measures bear scrutiny if examined on their own merits. The decree of Berlin, the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine, the establishment of Joseph on the Spanish throne, the marriage with Austria, are now admitted, even by his most ardent admirers, to have been stupendous blunders which would have ruined any other ruler, and which even his extraordinary military genius could only partially repair. His domestic administration during the two years of nominal peace that followed upon the conclusion of the Treaty of Amiens is often pointed at with admiration, though with what reason we fail to see, unless a systematic endeavor to centralize despotism in the person of a ruler be regarded as an evidence of good government.

Napoleon certainly was, what Lanfrey calls him, a wonderful organizer of despotism, and he devoted all his tremendous powers, during those short years, to reducing the personal and political liberties of his countrymen to a minimum. He was so successful that, had his insane ambition allowed him a few more years of peace, he would undoubtedly have reduced the French people to a deeper state of degradation than that in which they had lived before the great revolution. In return for their liberties he built them some excellent roads and dug a few canals—facts which his admirers are continually bringing forward in proof of his greatness as a ruler, just as defenders of the Second Empire replied to all criticism upon

the state of the country by triumphantly saying, "See what a magnificent city Napoleon III. has made of Paris."

Napoleon's fame as a legislator is shown to be built on a still weaker foundation of fact than his fame as a diplomatist and statesman. Many people probably imagine that the great code that bears his name was, in the main, the product of his single mind, whereas it was, in reality, the collective work of a body composed of the best jurists in France. He cannot even lay claim to the merit of having first recognized the necessity for the framing of such a code. The governments of the Convention and the Directory both passed laws to the effect that this great work should be entered on as speedily as possible; but the stormy state of the times and the presence of more pressing affairs caused these laws to remain a dead letter. Napoleon is entitled to great gratitude for having revived and carried them out—but for little else. Lanfrey gives us a most amusing account of the share Napoleon took in the composition of the code. It consisted in occasionally attending the meetings of the board, delivering, in a loud and pompous voice, ridiculous opinions upon subjects of which he knew nothing, and throwing, generally, as much obstruction as he possibly could in the way of the jurists. He even went so far as sometimes to make corrections—corrections which in almost every instance were exceedingly puerile, and without which the code would have been much nearer perfect than it now is. He was perpetually striving to introduce, into laws framed for all time, clauses having a special bearing upon present incidents. Indeed, few men were ever so eminently unfitted for the post of legislator. "As soon as he wished to touch upon matters of pure legislation, his legal knowledge somewhat resembled the Greek and Latin of the *médecin malgré lui*." His genius, as Lanfrey admits, was prodigious, but it moved in a very narrow channel.

The third volume of the English edition gives us the history of the Emperor's career from 1806 to 1810. It is, in many respects, the most interesting, because it presents a new phase of the great struggle—Napoleon *versus* the liberties of mankind. Before the invasion of Spain, he had to do only with princes and governments. The uprising of the Spanish people was the signal for a general popular awakening all over Europe. For the first time Napoleon was forced to deal with moral forces, which he despised,

and which he never learned to fight with success. As Lanfrey says:

"The charm was broken; the weak point of the colossus was discovered; the conqueror of kings was not as yet the conqueror of the people; the side which had so often lost when playing against him might now recommence the game with hope of success."

In no instance is his fairness of mind and elevation above all national prejudices more strikingly shown than in his account of the growth of that great anti-Napoleonic movement that ended in the birth of the German nation. Let us give his own words:

"In Germany, the rebound of the events in Spain caused throughout the land a kind of electric shock which gave birth to what had never before existed, namely, the German nation. The great intellectual *renaissance* of Germany during the eighteenth century had, it is true, prepared the way by forming the moral individuality of the people, but it was amidst the throes of defeat and foreign occupation that this glorious birth took place, and the word German country was pronounced for the first time in the world. All the old antagonism, all the superannuated feuds between Northern and Southern Germany, between the larger and smaller states, between the princes and the higher ranks of the ancient aristocracy, between the noble and the citizen, between the House of Austria and the House of Brandenburg, disappeared instantaneously, to make way for one single sentiment—hatred of the French yoke. The initiative belonged to no class in particular—it was universal and simultaneous."

And this from a Frenchman!

In the noble tribute the historian pays to the memory of Toussaint L'Ouverture, of San Domingo, he says:

"He [L'Ouverture] could die, for he had accomplished a great thing. He had proved to the world that the blacks were men, and men capable of governing themselves."

One can say with equal truth of Pierre Lanfrey that he, too, has proved a great fact which the world has heretofore declined to admit, namely: that there is at least one French historian whose love of truth and justice is far above the reach of national prejudice.

"Why was not this book written before?" is a question we constantly find ourselves asking. Had it appeared thirty years sooner, we sincerely believe the French people would never have patiently submitted to twenty years' degradation under the Second Empire. In no nation have historians more power to shape the destinies of their country than in France. Thiers, for instance, by glorifying the first Napoleon, probably did more than any one man in France to help the third Napoleon to his throne.

It may not be out of place to give a specimen of the different way in which these two historians, Lanfrey and Thiers, regard the same subject. In speaking of the English press at the time of the projected invasion of England, Lanfrey says:

"There was one corner of the earth, and but one, where his [Napoleon's] acts and person could be freely criticised—where one could (a thing a thousand times worse than injuries) speak the truth to him—to him, the man before whom the universe was silent."

Thiers says:

"The British press, insulting and arrogant as the whole press is in a free country, ridiculed Napoleon and his preparations; but it was the ridicule of a mocker who trembles while he laughs."

It certainly is one of the most hopeful signs of the new era in France that Thiers's work is gradually being superseded by that of Lanfrey. This is a significant fact, for no man handles the weaknesses of his countrymen more unsparingly. He has far too high an idea of the dignity of an historian to attempt to gain popularity by flattery. Severe as he is upon Napoleon, he never attempts to make him a scapegoat for those faults that belong to the people at large. Indeed, he frankly declares that a large share of Napoleon's success was due to the skill with which he flattered the "incurable vanity" of the national character. He says:

"History has another mission than that of pleasing. She is no more made to be the courtesan of a people than to be the courtesan of a king."

In conclusion, we would say that this is a book to be read *through*, rather than to be read *in*. Its style is far more argumentative than narrative. The reader who misses a single link in the chain of evidence will be sure to consider the writer exceedingly unjust and one-sided—a conclusion he will never reach, in our opinion, if he read the book from the very beginning to the very end.

One thing is certain: However much opinions may differ as to the literary merits of the work, no earnest person can put it down without saying of its author, "This was a man!"

Could Lanfrey have lived but a few years longer, he would, without doubt, have experienced a keen sense of satisfaction after having read the two posthumous works of Metternich and Rémusat that have recently been given to the public. The certainty

afford by these new sources that he had divined truly in cases where it was impossible for him to speak absolutely, the confirmation of a judgment that many critics had pronounced positively wrong, and many more had considered bitterly one-sided and prejudiced, and, above all, the triumph of truth and justice for truth and justice's sake, would all have combined to cheer the last moments of a sick and wearied man. When we add to this the fact that the appearance of one of these works, at least, would have put an end to the isolation of his position as a man who had dared to lift up his voice against an idol blindly worshiped by the majority of his countrymen, we can hardly refrain from accusing fate of cruelty, or from calling his death untimely. The least we can do is to recall his memory at this time, when the sensation created by Metternich and Rémusat is at its height, and when his own services to history and humanity are in too great danger of being overlooked. Let us not forget that the accusing voices of the former come to us from the tombs, while that of the latter rang out clear and strong from the lips of a living man, at a moment when the name and the system of the tyrant whom he so ruthlessly exposed were once again enslaving the liberties of his countrymen. The debt that France owes to him is great, and will appear ever greater as the years roll on. When the bitterness of party spirit has passed away, when time has dimmed, as it must and will, the blinding splendor of the Napoleonic star, the name of Lanfrey will be pronounced with gratitude by every patriotic Frenchman, and by every friend of humanity throughout the world.

It would be hard to find three works dealing with the same subject, and pronouncing a verdict so singularly in accord, that differ more from one another than do those of Metternich, Rémusat, and Lanfrey. The intense moral motive, and the breadth of view and freedom from national and personal prejudice that inspire every page of Lanfrey, are wanting to the two former; while, on the other hand, the lack of these qualities is partly made up by the fact that their judgment was formed from actual personal experience, and gives us a view of Napoleon that has all the warmth of a picture copied from life; yet, although each writer regards Napoleon from an entirely different stand-point, he is painted in black by them all.

It is in the nature of things that the memoirs of Madame de Rémusat will be read a hundred times where those of Metternich will be read once; the former will have the most interest for the special biographer, the latter for the general historian. Madame de Rémusat tells us many circumstances about Napoleon that are interesting, striking, and valuable, but few, if any, that have not been related before, though never in such detail or upon such good authority. Metternich, on the other hand, though much more concise, much more dry, and much less pleasing, gives us some facts that he alone could know, and that change the whole current of historical opinion. His exact account of the Dresden interview—the famous “hat” interview, to use a Carlylism—is in itself enough to make his work of incalculable value. It gives us in a few words the key to Napoleon's whole character and policy. Here, when disguise was of no further use, when no witness but Metternich was present to hear his words, he throws aside his mask and stands boldly forth—the brutal egotist that he really was. “You are no soldier,” he shrieked out to the Austrian statesman, who had vainly endeavored to make him listen to reason, “and you do not know what goes on in the mind of a soldier. I was brought up in the field, and a man such as I am does not concern himself much about the lives of a million of men,” only he used here a brutal expression that the courtly Austrian does not venture to repeat.* Even Metternich—the cold and calculating Metternich—was deeply shocked and moved. “‘You are lost, sire!’ I said, quickly. ‘I had a presentiment of it when I came; now, in going, I have the certainty.’” Notwithstanding the fact that Napoleon has said of Metternich, “He approaches to being a statesman—he lies very well,” there is not the slightest reason to doubt that this interview was reported precisely as it happened. That Napoleon's judgment of Metternich—though meant to be complimentary—was as grossly unjust as most of the judgments he passed upon his contemporaries, is beyond question. His own mendacity was so great that he could afford to be generous, and almost the only trace we can discover of that magnanimity for which his admirers are fond of giving him credit is the willing-

* *Memoirs of Prince Metternich.* Edited by Prince Richard Metternich. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

ness with which he concedes to others a share of that attribute which he justly considered to be a prominent feature of his own character. One of his uncles, he used to say with pride, had predicted that he would one day govern the world, because he was an habitual liar. As an instance of the superlative degree of proficiency he had attained in this art, let us give another extract from Metternich's memoirs. The last words of Lannes, as given by Napoleon's official bulletins, have gone the rounds of history. "Farewell, sire!" he is reported to have said. "Live for the world, but think at times of your best friend, who in a few hours will be no more. * * * Would that I might live to serve you and my country!" "You have read," complacently remarked Napoleon to Metternich, "the sentence I put into Lannes's mouth—he never thought of it. When the marshal pronounced my name, they came to tell me, and immediately I declared he must be dead. Lannes hated me cordially. He spoke my name as atheists do the name of God when they come to die. Lannes having called for me, I looked upon his case as hopeless."

Surely, it is not strange that such a man should himself predict that the world would relieve itself of an "*Ouf!*" upon hearing of his death.

It is with no intention of belittling the importance of these memoirs of Metternich and Madame de Rémusat that we say that their greatest value, in our eyes, consists in the fact that they so strikingly confirm and supplement the judgment pronounced by Lanfrey. His study of Napoleon's character and methods was so profound that he has, without the aid of these new sources, and by the simple process of deduction, anticipated the result of the disclosures that they make. Yet, if their appearance should effect no other good than to enlarge the circle of Lanfrey's readers, and to silence those critics who have sought to weaken the effect of his verdict by pronouncing it exaggerated and unjust, the world would still owe a hearty vote of thanks to their authors. It is Lanfrey who has given us the real picture of Napoleon. Others may add touches here and there, but the great central figure, with its bold outlines and gigantic proportions, will always remain his work.